DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 203 264 CG 015 247

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TITLE Erasing Sex Bias Through Staff Training: Sex Stereotyping: Personal Characteristics. Unit III.
INSTITUTION University of North Florida, Jacksonville.
SPONS AGENCY Florida State Dept. of Education, Tallahassee. Div. of Vocational, Technical and Adult Education.
PUB DATE 80
NOTE 24p.: For related documents, see CG 015 244-248.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Aspiration; Counselor Attitudes; Counselors; *Counselor Training; *Cultural Influences; *Females; *Individual Characteristics; Role Perception; Self Concept; *Sex Bias; *Sex Stereotypes; Staff Development; Workshops

ABSTRACT

This document, one of four staff training units in a series designed to attack problems of sex bias in the counseling of women and girls, is intended to help counselors and counselor educators consider their knowledge of and attitudes toward the sex-limited status of women. In this unit, a staff training workshop strategy is presented to increase counselors' sensitivity to the: (1) limiting nature of sex stereotyping in America; (2) influence of cultural expectation on the development of aspirations among children and young adults; (3) need to identify and eliminate sex-role stereotyping in counseling; and (4) need to assist girls and women in the development of positive self-concepts. Workshop objectives, competencies, preparation, procedures, and time requirements are listed. Examples of pre-tests, readings, and competency checks for workshop participants are also provided. (Author/NRB)

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ED203264

ERASING SEX BIAS THROUGH STAFF TRAINING

UNIT III: SEX STEREOTYPING: PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

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CG 015247

This project was funded through the
Division of Vocational, Technical,
and Adult Education
Florida Department of Education
Tallahassee, Florida

1980

The project was conducted pursuant to a grant from the Division of Vocational Education, Florida Department of Education. Contractors undertaking such projects are encouraged to express freely their professional judgments in the conduct of the project. Points of view or opinions stated do not, therefore, necessarily represent the official position or policy of the Florida Department of Education.

ERASING SEX BIAS THROUGH STAFF TRAINING

INTRODUCTION

As the struggle of women to achieve equal education and equal employment opportunities has intensified during the last decade, the need to directly confront prevailing sexist attitudes in the United States culture has become apparent. Of particular consequence are the biased attitudes of teachers, counselors, and school administrators who have a direct influence on the way boys and girls come to think of themselves, on the way high school students make decisions about careers and post-secondary education, on the way young men and women in schools and colleges view their roles in the adult society.

Counselors, in their work with students in small groups or as individuals, have a great opportunity to influence evolving perceptions of self among girls and boys, women and men. Yet counselors themselves may bring to their professional work those sex-role stereotypes which reflect their own socialization.

Four staff training units have been developed as a part of the series of publications ERASING SEX BIAS THROUGH STAFF TRAINING, designed to attack problems of sex bias in the counseling of women and girls. These four units, each of which contains workshop strategies, have the following themes:

WOMEN IN EMPLOYMENT - designed to increase counselors' knowledge of (1) myths and stereotypes surrounding

women as workers; (2) facts related to participation of women in the labor force; (3) internal and external barriers to women's achievement in the world of work; (4) factors that influence career decisions among girls and women.

EDUCATION OF WOMEN - designed to increase counselors' knowledge of (1) the status of women in education as a profession; (2) sex-stereotyping practices in education; (3) support systems to combat sex-role stereotyping; (4) methods to identify and eliminate sex-role stereotyping in educational policies and programs.

SEX STEREOTYPING: PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS - designed to increase counselors' sensitivity to (1) the limiting nature of sex stereotyping in the society of America; (2) the influence of cultural expectations on the development of aspirations among children and young adults; (3) the need to identify and eliminate sex-role stereotyping in counseling practices and processes; (4) the need to assist girls and women in the development of self-concepts congruent with their full potential.

SEX STEREOTYPING: CAREER POTENTIALS - designed to increase counselors' sensitivity to (1) the development of career aspirations among girls and women; (2) the force of sex-role socialization in occupational choice; (3) the need to identify and eliminate sex-role stereotyping in career guidance practices and processes; (4) the need to assist girls and women in the development of career plans congruent with their capacity to achieve.

Counselors, and the counselor educators who prepare them for the profession, have an obligation to be knowledgeable about and sensitive to the changing roles of women in the United States. Their work with girls and women must show recognition of the "second revolution" as described in the frontispiece of the report of the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN IN HIGHER EDUCATION:

> The second (revolution) is now occurring as women, no longer so concentrated on and sheltered for their child-bearing and child-rearing functions, are demanding equality of treatment in all aspects of life, are demanding a new sense of purpose.

UNIT III

SEX STEREOTYPING: PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

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OBJECTIVES

- To increase counselors' sensitivity to the limiting nature of sex stereotyping in American society.
- To increase counselors' sensitivity to the influence of cultural expectation on the development of aspirations among children and young adults.
- To increase counselors' sensitivity to the need to identify and eliminate sex-role stereotyping in counseling practices and processes.
- To increase counselors' sensitivity to the need to assist girls and women in the development of self-concepts congruent with their full potential.

WORKSHOP

SEX STEREOTYPING: PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

COMPETENCIES

1. Counselors will be able to give examples of sex stereotyping which affect individual's personal characteristics.

2. Counselors will recognize their own perceptions of role limits which are attributable to sex stereotyping.

3. Counselors will be able to state their own meaning of the terms "masculine" and "feminine."

4. Counselors will recognize ways in which sex stereotyping impacts on counseling processes.

WORKSHOP

SEX STEREOTYPING
PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

PREPARATION

1. DUPLICATE COPIES OF EACH OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS FOR WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS:

   a. Pre-Test: SEX STEREOTYPING - THE PERSON

   b. Reading: SEX STEREOTYPING: PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

   c. Copies of the following list of sexist statements:

      Why would a nice girl like you....
      Don't worry your pretty little head about....
      For a woman, you....
      Listen, honey....
      I know this sounds sexist, but I really think....
      Women really don't handle_____as well as men do.
      Don't you think women are better suited for....
      Women have a way of....
      It takes a man to....
      Women are better at....
      Men are better at....

   d. Competency Check: SEX STEREOTYPING: PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

2. OBTAIN NEWSPRINT AND POST, IN ADVANCE, IN THE WORKSHOP MEETING ROOM.

   Allow sufficient writing space to display participants' responses to common sex stereotypes (at least four sheets).

PROCESS

1. Explain the purposes of the workshop:

   TO INCREASE COUNSELORS' SENSITIVITY TO THE LIMITING NATURE OF SEX STEREOTYPING IN AMERICAN SOCIETY.

   TO INCREASE COUNSELORS' SENSITIVITY TO THE INFLUENCE OF CULTURAL EXPECTATIONS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF ASPIRATIONS AMONG CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULTS.

   TO INCREASE COUNSELORS' SENSITIVITY TO THE NEED TO IDENTIFY AND ELIMINATE SEX-ROLE STEREOTYPING IN COUNSELING PRACTICES AND PROCESSES.

   TO INCREASE COUNSELORS' SENSITIVITY TO THE NEED TO ASSIST GIRLS AND WOMEN IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF SELF-CONCEPTS CONGRUENT WITH THEIR FULL POTENTIAL.

2. Distribute copies of the Pre-Test: Sex Stereotyping - The Person.

   Explain the directions and allow about 10 minutes for the participants to complete the exercise. Emphasize that no names are to be attached to the lists and that individuals are asked to express their "real" opinions.

3. When everyone has had a chance to complete the Pre-Test, collect the lists and mix them so that the originators cannot be identified.

   ASK TWO VOLUNTEERS TO TALLY REPONSES TO THE PRE-TEST ITEMS. USE A MASTER LIST OF ADJECTIVES. WHEN THEY HAVE COMPLETED THE TALLY, ASK THEM TO REPORT THE RESULTS TO THE PARTICIPANTS.

   INVITE PARTICIPANTS TO COMMENT ON THE RESULTS.

   (1) Are there notable differences in the words accorded to men? to women? to both men and women?

(2) What is the generalized impression, using the dominant adjectives, of a man?

(3) What is the generalized impression, using the dominant adjectives, of a woman?

(4) Using the adjectives, how are men and women alike?

(5) Ask participants to express their feelings about the generalized impression. Do they agree? Disagree? In what respects? What would they add or subtract from the generalizations?

(6) Are there differences in the expressions of opinions between women and men in the participant group?

4. Distribute the lists of sexist statements. ASK PARTICIPANTS TO READ EACH STATEMENT AND TO COMPLETE IT WITH A COMMON STEREOTYPE.

   ASK A VOLUNTEER TO POST THE STEREOTYPES ON NEWSPRINT.

   INVITE PARTICIPANTS TO SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCES WITH THESE AND SIMILAR STEREOTYPES. ENCOURAGE EXPRESSIONS OF FEELINGS ABOUT PERSONAL EXPERIENCES WITH STEREOTYPING.

   INVITE PARTICIPANTS TO PRIVATELY WRITE OUT EXAMPLES OF DEMEANING PHRASES THEY HAVE USED WHICH COMMUNICATE SEX BIAS AND/OR STEREOTYPING.

5. ELICIT IDEAS FROM PARTICIPANTS ON WAYS TO HANDLE SEXIST REMARKS. INVITE DEBATE ON THE DEFINITION OF THE WORD "SEXIST."

   Allow about 30-45 minutes for the two exercises on sexism.

6. Make summarizing remarks to reiterate the need for counselors to be sensitive to sexism and the feelings it creates in the victim.

7. Introduce Reading: SEX STEREOTYPING: PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

   ASK PARTICIPANTS TO READ THE MATERIAL CAREFULLY BEFORE THE NEXT WORKSHOP AND TO BRING REACTIONS OR QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION.

8. INTRODUCE DISCUSSION GROUPS AND ROLE-PLAYING ON THE SUBJECT OF SEX STEREOTYPING. REPEAT THE COUNSELOR COMPETENCIES TO BE ACHIEVED:

Be able to give examples of sex stereotyping which affect individual's personal characteristics.

Be able to recognize their own perceptions of the role limits which are attributable to sex stereotyping.

Be able to state their own meaning of the terms "masculine" and "feminine."

Be able to recognize ways in which sex stereotyping impacts on counseling processes.

ASK FOR SIX VOLUNTEERS TO ROLE-PLAY COUNSELOR/FEMALE COUNSELEE ROLES. ASSIGN A PAIR TO EACH OF THE FOLLOWING SITUATIONS:

(1) a sixteen year old girl seeks the counselor's help in developing post-secondary plans. She has an over-all "B" average and has shown particular interest in math subjects where her grades are all "A".

She has a boyfriend and plans to become engaged when she is 18. He is 18 now and a student at the local community college which offers many courses in the trades. He plans to take a job at a local industry.

She tells the counselor, "I know that his college really doesn't offer things I'm interested in - like computers - but I don't want to run the risk of being 'out-of-sight, out-of-mind, so I think I should plan to go to school there, too."

(2) A twenty-six year-old female, mother of a three-year-old, seeks the counselor's help with a particular concern. She has an opportunity to take a position as a travel advisor with a travel agency. The salary is good and the fringe benefits include

discounts for world-wide travel. She wants to take the job, but her husband thinks she should stay at home at least until the child enters school.

She tells the counselor that she is really up-set by her husband's point of view. She adds, "I just feel that I have been tied down too much already. After all, you're only young once, and why shouldn't I be able to do something that would be more interesting than watching television?"

(3) A female college senior who has majored in political science seeks the counselor's help because she has been unable to find a job that would make use of her knowledge and talents.

Her father has connections so that she could obtain a clerical job in the Mayor's office in her home town.

"At least this would be a foot in the door," she says, "or do you think a master's degree should be my next step? I could just stay on in school, and then I'd be better prepared. Maybe then someone will hire me for a better job?"

EXCUSE THE PARTICIPANTS AND GIVE THEM ABOUT 10-15 MINUTES TO PREPARE THEIR ROLES.

INSTRUCT THE REST OF THE PARTICIPANTS TO LISTEN FOR AND NOTE ANY STATEMENTS REFLECTING SEX-ROLE STEREOTYPING BY EITHER THE FEMALE CHARACTER OR THE COUNSELOR CHARACTER.

When the role-players are ready, give them about 15-20 minutes to role-play. At the end of that time, invite group discussion.

ASK PARTICIPANTS TO SHARE THEIR REACTIONS TO THE ROLE-PLAY, NOTING ANY SEX STREOTYPES WHICH THEY OBSERVED. FORM SMALL GROUPS OF 5-7 PERSONS FOR THE DISCUSSION. GIVE THE FOLLOWING INSTRUCTION:

Review each role-playing situation. Determine whether or not sex stereotyping was in evidence.

Discuss the approaches used by each counselor and the extent to which the group members agree with the approaches.

Speculate on the process had each counselee been a male instead of a female.

ASSIGN ONE OBSERVER TO EACH GROUP. THE OBSERVER IS TO REPORT ON THE FOLLOWING:

1. Differences in points of view expressed by men and women in the discussion groups.
2. Differences of opinions expressed by men and women with regard to counselors' approaches.
3. Differences of opinions expressed by men and women with regard to a male counselee versus the female counselee.

Allow about 15-20 minutes for the small group discussions. At the end of that time INVITE EACH OBSERVER TO REPORT FINDINGS TO THE TOTAL GROUP. INVITE ADDITIONAL COMMENTS FROM GROUP MEMBERS.

9. INVITE PARTICIPANTS TO DESCRIBE THE DEGREE TO WHICH THE WORKSHOP INCREASED THEIR SENSITIVITY TO SEX-STEREOTYPING: THE DEGREE TO WHICH THE WORKSHOP INCREASED THEIR SENSITIVITY TO THEIR OWN BIASES.

   ASK PARTICIPANTS TO PRIVATELY WRITE OUT THE MEANING, TO THEMSELVES, OF THE WORDS "MASCULINE" AND "FEMININE."

   INVITE SEVERAL INDIVIDUALS TO SHARE THEIR DESCRIPTIONS.

10. Distribute copies of the Competency Check. Ask participants to complete the competency check and invite a peer to review the responses to detect presence or absence of sex stereotyping.

11. Summarize workshop activities and relate remarks to objectives of the unit.

TIME: 2 1/2 HOURS

WORKSHOP

SEX STEREOTYPING
PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

PRE-TEST

SEX STEREOTYPING: THE PERSON

The following adjectives may be used to describe positive characteristics of men or women or they may be equally appropriate for both sexes. Check the column under "Man" if you think the adjective is more appropriately used to describe a man; the column under "Woman" if more appropriately used to describe a woman. If the adjective could be used for either sex, place a check in both columns.

Man	Adjectives	Woman
	competent	
	empathetic	
	emotional	
	sensitive	
	nurturing	
	aggressive	
	intelligent	
	tactful	
	submissive	
	understanding	
	neat	
	competitive	
	cooperative	
	considerate	
	decisive	
	compassionate	
	opinionated	
	dedicated	
	ambitious	
	docile	
	strong	
	loving	
	sympathetic	
	calm	
	motivated	
	sensible	
	logical	
	methodical	
	willful	
	reticent	

READING

SEX STEREOTYPING: PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

The culture in which boys and girls "grow up" has an extremely forceful influence on the formation of life values, aspirations, and personality. The socialization process too often teaches girls and women that they are subservient, second-class citizens. It also may teach that non-conforming behavior ir ridiculed and unacceptable to the majority culture.

In the United States, studies have demonstrated that personal characteristics, conforming to sex-role stereotypes, are observable among children at very early ages. (Rohrbaugh, 1979; Jolfee, 1974; Chafetz, 1974; Boocock, 1972; Maccoby and Jacklin, 1974) Chafetz makes the observation: "Through the socialization process, humans come to more or less completely internalize the roles, norms, and values appropriate to the culture and subculture within which they function." (p. 69) She later adds that cultural definitions become personal definitions of propriety, normality, and worthiness.

The family constellation and dynamics are major factors in the development of children's personal characteristics. These forces communicate what is acceptable and what is not acceptable behavior, and, generally, the standards for girls differ from the standards for boys. Based on a desire to be accepted and approved,

"boys are boys" and girls adopt conforming, passive behaviors; they're "nice."

As children progress through the school system, they adopt behaviors which they have learned are expected of them by virtue of their sex. Girls, in many instances, learn that they are not to be competitive, and this "learning" is reinforced by peer pressure to conform to the stereotyped but acceptable standards. (Boocock, 1972) Boys may suffer stress created by pressure on them to adopt sex-stereotyped roles. Firester and Firester (1974) charge that the schools have "a contributory role in the destruction of boys' minds and self-esteem." Tibbitts (1977) finds that boys, as well as girls, are cramped by rigid sex-stereotypes: (1) male self-esteem is contingent upon accomplishments; (2) males are more severely punished for acting like a female than vice versa; (3) males experience greater conflict regarding their behavior; (4) males seem less secure about their sexual identity; (5) males must always be best.

Role behaviors are learned, and both boys and girls, men and women, suffer from the stresses and anxieties which arise as they attempt to carry out their ascribed roles. Faunce (1977) suggests that indeed both women and men fear ambition, achievement, and accomplishment, but that men, unlike women, are forced to face up to their fears and find, as a result, that they are unfounded.

She makes the point that "Women are not challenged to face their fears and thus never lose them and remain self-doubting." (p. 140)

Problems, Perceptions, and Personal Characteristics

Generalizing about personal characteristics of women "as a group" is another form of stereotyping, but the literature reveals strong tendencies for both females and males to ascribe personal characteristics which may or may not be fact. Typical examples from research include those described below.

Bailey, Zinser, and Edgar studied perceptions among male and female college students. They found that both males and females regarded "the typical female student" as more intelligent than males; more motivated; more academically successful. Women saw themselves as having higher motivation and achievement than men. This contrasts not only with the well known Horner "motive to avoid success" conclusion but also with other studies of women's perceptions of themselves and their talents. Barnett and Baruch (1978) conclude that the research shows "For women...misperceptions (of competence) are remarkably consistent in one direction; women tend to underestimate themselves, particularly in thier abilities and performance, to 'assume incompetence.'"

Ginn (1975) studied the estimates of 200 undergraduate psychology students on problems men and women would present at

a university counseling center. Thirty-five problems, of a total of 75, were viewed as "typically female" problems by the evaluators. Sixteen were viewed as "typically male." When actual presenting problems were catalogued, sex differences were found in only three of the 75 problems: "too easily moved to tears" and "over-eating" were significantly more characteristic of female problems; "unable to concentrate" was significantly more characteristic of a male problem.

Studies of values are of particular interest in an attempt to understand similarities and differences between female and male personal characteristics. Beech and Schoeppe (1974) conducted an extensive study of 5th, 7th, 9th, and 11th graders to identify their developing value systems. Among the findings presented by the researchers are the following statements: (1) Both boys and girls across all four grades rank as important values "a world at peace," "freedom," "honest" and "loving." (2) Both boys and girls ranked low the values "salvation," "logical" and "imaginative." (3) Values which increase significantly for both boys and girls as they progress through the grades are "a sense of accomplishment," "self respect," and "wisdom." (4) While "Intellectual" is an increasing value for boys, it is not for girls. Beech and Schoeppe state: "Girls may not see intelligence as so important for them since they are frequently encouraged not to compete with boys intellectually."

Counselor Stereotypes

Although earlier corroborative research already existed, the Broverman et al study (1970), coinciding as it did with heightened national attention to the treatment of girls and women in American culture, is considered a classic contribution to the literature of the Women's Movement. The study tested three hypotheses: (1) that clinical judgments about mental health of individuals would differ as a function of the sex of the person judged; (2) that the differences in judgments would be similar to established sex-role stereotypes; (3) that attributes regarded as ideal for a sex unspecified adult would be considered more often by clinical judges as appropriate for men than for women. Results of the study suggest that clinical judgments, indeed, are influenced by clinician bias.

Abramowitz et al (1973), in a study of clinicians' political bias as a factor in evaluations, found that "non-liberal counselors imputed greater maladjustment to a left-oriented politically active female than to an identically described male student client. Pointing out the possibility of clinician discrimination against liberated women, the researchers note:

> The public and practitioners in general may not be aware of how much of which sectors of the variation in clinical determinations are governed by an evaluator's personal predilections which may have scant relevance to the question of the evaluatee's psychological status...(p. 391)

Although women outnumber men in the ranks of school counselors, that fact does not necessarily mean that sex bias in counseling and guidance will be reduced. The literature has shown that female counselors are as likely as males to reflect biases and attitudes which are stereotypic and limiting toward women's potential and toward women's roles. As a corollary, women themselves, while the most vocal proponents for passage of the Equal Rights Amendment, are also the most vocal opponents. Female counselors, then, may very well reflect attitudes of "the larger society," both pro and con.

In the absence of any pressing demand from society to reform, practices perpetrated by counselors and counselor educators generally are not scrutinized for sex fairness. Without careful monitoring and any exercise of legal enforcement of legislation, the federal initiatives are little more than permissive guidelines. When the profession, collectively, fails to give highest priority to recognition of counselor sex bias as a critical issue, counseling and guidance services for girls and women are not likely to be modified. On the other hand, as counselors and counselor educators recognize their biases and take steps to deal with them as they may interfere with counseling and guidance practices and training, they may realize the potential described by Mary Ellen Verheyden-Hilliard (1978) as follows:

> Counselors are the official resource persons for students at all educational levels who seek help concerning educational plans, career goals, and personal and interpersonal decisions. They are the official referral sources for parents and for educators concerned about the behaviors and attitudes of students at all levels of education. The

> counselor who is also educator trains new counselors, teaches those counselors who return to school for further training, and conducts in-service courses in local school systems. Counselors thus have the potential to influence not only students and the counseling profession but classroom teachers and administrators. (p. 27)

Thoughts on Counseling Girls and Women

Counselors can create, in their work with boys and girls and with women and men, a climate for learning that emphasizes individual potential; that challenges both sexes to achieve without necessarily inducing competition; without emphasizing the sex of the child in analyses of individual performance.

Counselors can help teachers, too, to combat the deeply ingrained tendency to hold different behavioral expectations for children, depending primarily upon their sex.

Counselors, trained in consultation skills, can assist teachers and parents in understanding that ambition, rather than being genetically determined, is stifled or whetted by one's experiences. Tasks assigned to children in school or at home can perpetuate sex-role stereotypes or break convention.

Harway and Astin (1977) provide an appropriate final statement: "Counselors must expose the myths and stereotypes, expand knowledge about the nature and impact of a self-concept, and help students develop self-concepts congruent with their full potential." (p. 35)

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COMPETENCY CHECK

Respond to the following statements, and ask a peer to review your responses to detect presence or absence of sex stereotyping.

1. I would describe my counseling style with women as follows:

2. This style is similar to or different from the style I use with men in the following obvious ways:

3. As I think about it, I generally expect women to behave in the following ways:

4. My expectations of girls, as counselees, are that they will behave in the following ways:

5. To me, a fully self-actualized female is:

6. I would describe a fully self-actualized male as:

7. My views about self-actualized females and males have the following implications for my work in counseling and guidance:

8. When engaged in career counseling or career guidance with girls and women, I am generally sensitive to particular issues related to sexism and sex stereotyping. These include:

9. The issues I just mentioned are important/unimportant in counseling and guidance with boys and men.

10. My attitudes toward women have changed over the years in the following ways:

11. I hold certain attitudes toward women which may be defined as biases or stereotypes. These are the attitudes I would like to explore further: